

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
October 17 & 18, 2006**

The regular meeting of the Washington State Transportation Commission was called to order at 9 A.M., on October 17, 2006, in Room 1D2 of the Transportation Building in Olympia, Washington.

Commissioners present at the meeting were: Chair Ford, Ed Barnes, Bob Distler, Elmira Forner, Carol Moser, Dan O'Neal and Dale Stedman.

MINUTES APPROVAL

It was moved by the Commission to approve the minutes of the August 15 & 16 and September 19 & 20, 2006 Commission meetings. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Moser requested that the record reflect that the Commission discussed the nine proposed Tolling Policies at the August 15 & 16, 2006 meeting and agreed to drop policy Item nine.

CITY AND COUNTY ROAD SAFETY NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

Ashley Probart, Transportation Coordinator, Association of Washington Cities, provided an overview of traffic safety at the local level. He noted that cities focus on high incident areas, and prioritize by collecting data annually, and then apply it to safety project selections. The data looks at types of incidents; pedestrians, bicycles and signalized/non-signalized intersections, and the nature of the accident. These are all important factors in addressing safety. Medium to small cities tend to not have dedicated safety project funding sources and are dependent on the Transportation Improvement Board and WSDOT. Cities do tend to be able to fund two to three projects per year from their own local funding source. Cities provide matching money for the funds that they receive from other sources for their transportation projects. He noted that the estimated costs for local road safety improvements to improve local accident locations on city streets is \$800 million, and safety improvements to address accident locations on city streets that are on state routes in larger cities is \$1.3 billion.

Walt Olsen, Deputy Director, County Road Administration Board (CRAB), discussed county successes, challenges and priorities. He shared nine primary road conditions identified by engineers and safety experts across the country that are found on county roads and considered to be potentially dangerous: roadside hazards, road surface conditions, narrow roads and bridges, railroad crossings, work zones, intersections, roadway design limitations, access problems and bike and pedestrian traffic. He noted that CRAB has had success in influencing many safety projects throughout the state.

UPDATE ON RTID AND OVERVIEW OF JTC PERFORMANCE MEASURE / BENCHMARK STUDY

Kjris Lund, Lund Consulting and Kathy Scanlan, Cedar River Group, provided an update to the Commission regarding the Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID). Ms. Lund explained that RTID and Sound Transit are working together, on a ballot measure for the November 2007 ballot, to address congestion. She explained that the way it is setup is both must pass the ballot to be enacted. The exception is the Alaskan Way Viaduct which has been called out for funding through the RTID measure. The priorities are to build off existing projects and focus on congested corridors; integrate road and transit investments, improve regional traffic flow and keep the package affordable. In closing she discussed the possibility of RTID putting forward the idea of tolling as part of the package for the 520 Bridge project. She noted the importance of the RTID and the Commission working closely on these proposed project packages. She emphasized that this financial package assumes different revenue sources, and assumes some things about the federal contribution.

Chair Ford referenced a letter dated September 16, 2003 from the Commission that was sent to the RTID regarding the use of tolling on projects with the exception of the SR 520/Evergreen Point Floating Bridge. The letter proposed that this project be linked to the voter-approved measure and/or the funding plan of the RTID package. Chair Ford indicated that in light of the Commission's Tolling Study the letter should no longer be considered a directive from the Commission. The Legislature would probably need to address this issue after the Tolling Study has been reviewed.

Ms. Lund noted that her firm has been retained by the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) to follow up on the Transportation Performance Audit Board's (TPAB) Study of Transportation Goals, Benchmarks and Ten-Year Investment Criteria and Process Study. She explained that the goal is to align the Governor's Priorities of Government, Washington Transportation Plan and the WSDOT Strategic Plan in order to simplify the goals and benchmarks, and carry forward the TPAB's recommendations to the Legislature. The report will be presented to the JTC in November 2006.

POG UPDATE

Robin Rettew, Office of Financial Management (OFM), explained that the key strategies Priorities of Government (POG) looks for are ways to make a difference in improving statewide mobility of people, goods and services. The three strategies identified were separated into categories of high (significant to accomplish the strategy driven by data analysis), medium (significant but not data driven) and low (not significant or not measured) importance. This information is used as a tool in making rational budget building decisions.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Steve Reinmuth, Director, Government Relations, WSDOT, provided an update on the status of the purchase of four new auto ferries. He provided an overview of the design build procurement (WSDOT does not design the vessels) process, noting that the key to this process is the associated risk of the design is put on the designer. He shared that Martinac Shipbuilding has filed a tort claim against the Department that implies there is a conspiracy to delay construction of the new vessels until 2014, when the Safe Harbor leases expires.

At this point the Department is expecting that a lawsuit will be filed with Pierce County Superior Court. In closing he noted that the Department is looking at all of the issues once again and has requested the assistance of the Expert Review Panel.

Secretary MacDonald shared information regarding various subjects. He specifically focused on obtaining the four new ferry vessels and the potential impacts of the delays. He noted that if one of the current steel electric vessels were to become inoperable there would be serious problems in meeting passenger needs. He referenced the complications of the current statute noting that there is no other choice but to move ahead with the current process. In closing he touched on the SR 520 and Alaskan Way Viaduct project issues.

TRANSIT TRENDS ACROSS THE STATE

Cathy Silins, Manager, Public Transportation & Commute Options Division, WSDOT, introduced Mike Harbour, General Manager, Intercity Transit and Peter Thein, Executive Director, Washington State Transit Association.

Ms. Silins spoke specifically to a statistical report that was presented to the Legislature “Transit Trends Across the State.” The report provides an overview of systems that serve urbanized areas, small cities or small urban areas and rural areas. She explained that in Puget Sound there are several transit authorities that service cities and urban areas. She stressed that the Grants Program provides a variety of public transportation services to small transit systems, such as fixed route, limited stop, neighborhood connectors, route deviated services, special needs and transit sponsored vanpool and ride matching services. She pointed out that public transportation is for everyone; service for the transit dependant and service for riders who use the bus by choice. Ridership is influenced by service availability, safety, reliability, cost and many other factors as seen in the report.

Mr. Harbour and Mr. Thein shared information regarding transit trends and the associated data.

COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Commission Annual Report

Paul Parker, Senior Policy Analyst, WSTC, distributed the Commission’s *draft* Annual Report for Commission discussion and direction. It is proposed that this Annual Report would also serve as the biennial Multimodal Transportation Progress in the State Report.

Draft 2007 Meeting Schedule

The draft 2007 Commission meeting date schedule was distributed for review and comment.

Update on Commission Office Move

Reema Griffith, Executive Director, WSTC, updated the Commission regarding the office move to a new facility. She also provided a briefing regarding the Commission’s State Auditor’s review, noting that the review found no findings. In closing she shared that the Commission’s 2007-09 budget package has been submitted to the Office of Financial Management for review.

PUBLIC AND LEGISLATOR COMMENT PERIOD

There were no public or Legislators present for comment.

The Commission meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m., on October 18, 2006.

WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

DICK FORD, Chair

ELMIRA FORNER, Vice-Chair

EDWARD BARNES, Member

CAROL MOSER, Member

DAN O'NEAL, Member

ROBERT S. DISTLER, Member

DALE STEDMAN, Member

DOUGLAS MACDONALD, Ex-Officio Member
Secretary of Transportation

ATTEST:

REEMA GRIFFITH, Executive Director

DATE OF APPROVAL